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May 1, 2017

Dear colleagues,

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your contributions to the provincial response related to the public health emergency on opioid overdoses. As we pass the first anniversary of the declaration of the public health emergency, I want to acknowledge both the significant pressure this crisis has placed on many parts of the health system, but also commend the work you and your teams have done to quickly and effectively scale up the locations where naloxone is available as well as the number of people well-trained to respond to someone experiencing an overdose.

Making sure naloxone is available and people are trained to use it is a key pillar of the provincial response to the public health emergency. Your tireless efforts to ensure that people can effectively respond to an opioid overdose by calling for help, providing breaths, and administering naloxone have been pivotal to our success in this area. Since 2016, over 32,000 naloxone kits have been distributed through the BC Take Home Naloxone program and hundreds of overdoses have been reversed as a result. Undoubtedly, your efforts have helped save the lives of many British Columbians as we work to address this crisis.

I would like to acknowledge how important your extraordinary efforts have been as overdose trainers in our response to this crisis. I know that many of you have taken additional measures such as obtaining first-aid certification and seeking additional training materials to ensure that you can provide high-quality overdose response training. These efforts are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P.R.W. Kendall", written over a solid black horizontal line.

P.R.W. Kendall
OBC, MBBS, MHSc, FRCPC
Provincial Health Officer